

## Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim: *Between Sunrise and Sunset*

United Arab Emirates Pavillion at the Venice Biennale



Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim, *Between Sunrise and Sunset*, 2022. Papier-mâché, cardboard, tea, tobacco, grass, leaves. 128 parts, dimensions variable. Courtesy of UAE National Pavilion at the Venice Biennale. Photo: Ismail Noor of Seeing Things.

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In *Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim: Between Sunrise and Sunset*, a single work makes up the entire exhibition of the National Pavilion of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which is now open at the 2022 Venice Biennale, with a virtual tour available here. A full spectrum of colors derive solely from the papier-mâché materials: brightly colored craft paper, dried grass, leaves, tea, coffee, and tobacco combine to make the work's 128 human-sized sculptural elements. Curated by Maya Allison, Executive Director of The New York University Abu Dhabi Art Gallery, this major new work by Emirati artist Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim is accompanied by a monograph book publication, chronicling the artist's life and work at the vanguard of the UAE's art community.

Ibrahim has spent the better part of four decades developing an intensely experimental and prolific art practice. He is known as a core member of “the five,” part of a tightly-knit group of experimental, conceptual artists who share his unflinching commitment to, and joy from, their work. That group includes Hassan Sharif, Abdullah Al-Saadi, Mohammed Kazem, and Hussain Sharif.

The commissioned artwork is derived from the artist’s deep connection to the physical environment of his hometown of Khor Fakkan—a city at the edge of the rocky Al Hajar mountains where they meet the waters on the east coast of the Emirate of Sharjah in the UAE. The exhibition title refers to his experience of the light there, where the mountains cast the town in afternoon shadow, obscuring the sunset on the west coast of the UAE. The color of the sculpture shifts from bright playful colors and forms to subdued black and white elements, and suggests undulating movement of bodies, mutation, and metamorphosis.

The exhibition’s accompanying book is a retrospective of Ibrahim’s life and work to date, and situates the artist in a global art-historical frame. The first comprehensive monograph on the artist, titled *Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim: Between Sunrise and Sunset / Works 1986-2022*, it is co-edited by Maya Allison and Cristiana de Marchi, artist, curator, and poet. With extensive essays from scholars, curators, and fellow artists, it surveys Ibrahim’s biomorphic abstraction paintings, his Land Art experiments and immersive installations, and the evolution of his sculptures to date, alongside a comprehensive biographical timeline. It is published by Kaph Books.

This marks Ibrahim and Allison’s fifth collaboration together, and the accompanying book is the third publication that Allison has worked on that studies Ibrahim’s work. Additionally, this is a second-time collaboration between National Pavilion UAE and New York University Abu Dhabi. This reflects the ongoing commitment of both institutions to supporting artists, curators, and scholars, and sustaining deep studies of the UAE’s art history to expand the knowledge of art across the globe.

*Mohamed Ahmed Ibrahim: Between Sunrise and Sunset* is open to the public at the 2022 Venice Biennale until Sunday, November 27, 2022. A virtual tour of the exhibition is also available on the National Pavilion UAE website. The book is available for purchase at the Biennale bookstores in the Arsenale and Giardini and online at Kaph Books.

The National Pavilion UAE is commissioned by the Salama bint Hamdan Al Nahyan Foundation and supported by the Ministry of Culture and Youth, with a permanent pavilion at the Venice Biennale’s Arsenale—Sale d’Armi.